

# WorkFirst Education and Training

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## *Education Benefits Families and Society:*

- **Financial Benefits**

- Higher personal income
- Lower unemployment
- More competitive economy
- Increased tax revenue
- Lower public subsidies
- Improved health outcomes

- **Citizenship**

- Higher levels of voting, volunteering and other civic behaviors

- **Parents Preparing Children**

- Increased participation in activities related to sports, religion and culture
- Increased savings for college
- Improved health outcomes

*From July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, more than 14,000 parents were served:*

- Customized Job Skills: 3,329
- Adult Basic Education, GED, ESL, & job training: 6,738
- High Wage/High Demand, I-BEST, Vocational Education, & Wage Progression: 4,273

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For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit [www.workfirst.wa.gov](http://www.workfirst.wa.gov) or [www.sbctc.ctc.edu](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu) and select Workforce Education.

## **How are education and training opportunities made available to WorkFirst families?**

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges awards block grants to 34 state community and technical colleges plus community-based organizations and private colleges, to deliver educational and job skills training services that meet the needs of WorkFirst parents and other low-income adults and their local economies. Both mainstream educational opportunities and specialized programs are offered.

## **What are the goals of these services?**

- To increase the number of WorkFirst parents entering employment with higher wages than they would otherwise obtain.
- To increase job placements for WorkFirst parents and others with low basic skills or limited English proficiency.
- To increase job placements and wage progression for other employed and low-income parents.

## **What are some of the training services?**

- **Customized Job Skills Training (CJST)** offers employer-driven programs for WorkFirst parents and low-income individuals, providing between 8 -22 weeks of training to develop skills in demand by local employers. Recent wage data indicates that on average, persons who complete Customized Jobs Skills Training earn \$9.39 per hour.
- **High Wage/High Demand, I-BEST, and Vocational Education programs** leading to certificate and/or degrees lasting up to one year. Provide even higher wages than CJST programs and are linked to fields with local area demand. Generally, WorkFirst Tuition Assistance is used to fund tuition, books, and fees for these programs.
- **Wage Progression Services** provide education in the workplace and other job skills training to enable working adults to increase their skill levels and earnings.
- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities** – Externships, Clinical Experiences, Co-operative Learning, and Work Study positions offered in conjunction with training give WorkFirst parents real work experience and a better opportunity to secure a job in their chosen field and earn a higher wage.
- **Other Basic Skills and Employment-Related Training** courses are for adults with specific needs, including limited English and basic skills. Training includes skill building to improve English, literacy levels, and develop employment skills.